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**Tuesday
9 February 2021**

**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
(HANSARD)**

HOUSE OF LORDS

WRITTEN STATEMENTS AND WRITTEN ANSWERS

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[I] indicates that the member concerned has a relevant registered interest. The full register of interests can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/standards-and-interests/register-of-lords-interests/>

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Ministers and others who make Statements or answer Questions are referred to only by name, not their ministerial or other title. The current list of ministerial and other responsibilities is as follows.

<i>Minister</i>	<i>Responsibilities</i>
Baroness Evans of Bowes Park	Leader of the House of Lords and Lord Privy Seal
Earl Howe	Deputy Leader of the House of Lords
Lord Agnew of Oulton	Minister of State, Treasury and Cabinet Office
Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon	Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Ashton of Hyde	Chief Whip
Baroness Barran	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
Baroness Berridge	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Department for International Trade
Lord Bethell	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist	Whip
Lord Callanan	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
Earl of Courtown	Deputy Chief Whip
Lord Gardiner of Kimble	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Baroness Goldie	Minister of State, Ministry of Defence
Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park	Minister of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
Lord Greenhalgh	Minister of State, Home Office and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
Lord Grimstone of Boscobel	Minister of State, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and Department for International Trade
Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay	Whip
Baroness Penn	Whip
Baroness Scott of Bybrook	Whip
Baroness Stedman-Scott	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Work and Pensions
Lord Stewart of Dirleton	Advocate-General for Scotland
Lord True	Minister of State, Cabinet Office
Baroness Vere of Norbiton	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Transport
Baroness Williams of Trafford	Minister of State, Home Office
Lord Wolfson of Tredegar	Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Justice
Viscount Younger of Leckie	Whip

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Written Statements

Tuesday, 9 February 2021

Contingencies Fund Advance

[HLWS769]

Lord Callanan: My Honourable friend the Minister for London and Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Small Business, Consumers and Labour Markets) (Paul Scully) has today made the following statement:

I hereby give notice of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy having drawn an advance from the contingencies fund totalling £2,819,000,000 to enable expenditure in connection with the governments'

response to Covid-19 support packages for business to fight the virus and build back better, to be spent ahead of the passage of the Supply and Appropriation Act in March 2021.

Parliamentary approval for additional resources of £1,459,000,000, additional capital of £1,110,000,000 and additional cash of £250,000,000 will be sought in a Supplementary Estimate for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at £2,819,000,000 will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.

The cash advance will be repaid upon receiving Royal Assent on the Supply and Appropriation Act.

Written Answers

Tuesday, 9 February 2021

Affordable Housing

Asked by *The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 26 January (HL Deb, col 1500), what assessment they have made of the level of household income that would be needed to afford a home defined as "affordable". [HL12697]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government does not prescribe a definition of affordability, but we recognise that the fundamental purpose of social housing is to provide affordable, safe and secure homes to those who cannot afford to rent or buy through the open market. This purpose is reflected in the definition of affordable housing in the National Planning Policy Framework and in our approach to setting maximum rent levels in social housing. The vast majority of rented social housing in England is let at Social Rent using a formula that takes account of relative county earnings (among several other factors). In the case of Affordable Rent, the initial rent is capped at up to 80 per cent of the equivalent market rent (except in London where both Social Rent and Affordable Rent levels tend to be lower).

The Government continues to invest to deliver different types of rented social housing to meet the needs of a wide range of households including those at risk of homelessness in areas of the country where affordability is most pressured.

For those who cannot afford their rent, Housing Benefit or Universal Credit is available to provide support with housing costs.

Apprentices and Work Experience: Advertising

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to create a single online portal for advertising (1) apprenticeships, and (2) work experience. [HL12622]

Baroness Berridge: Apprenticeship opportunities in England can be found on the 'Find an apprenticeship' (FAA) service on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>. Employers can use the 'recruit an apprentice' service to advertise on FAA; we encourage employers to use this to maximise engagement with their vacancies. Prospective apprentices can search for vacancies on FAA and create an account to manage their applications and get alerts about new apprenticeships.

We publish figures for monthly apprenticeship vacancies reported on the FAA website here: <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships>. Between

October and December 2020, employers advertised over 21,000 apprenticeship vacancies on the FAA website.

Traineeship opportunities in England can be found on the 'Find a traineeship' service on GOV.UK: <https://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship>. Providers can advertise traineeships on 'Find a traineeship' and young people can use the service to search and apply for the right opportunities for them.

We are enhancing the National Careers Service website to become a single source of government-assured careers information for young people and adults. The revamped website will bring together all the learning and careers routes available to people, along with improved content on work experience, the job market, and applying for roles. The website will also offer personalised content recommendations for users, access to local and regional careers information and advice for specific groups, including parents, school pupils and the unemployed. The Careers & Enterprise Company, who deliver support to schools and colleges to provide work experience, will ensure the site is used as part of careers education for young people. The National Careers Service website can be found here: <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>.

Apprentices: Assessments

Asked by *Lord Taylor of Warwick*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to allow teacher assessed grades for apprenticeships. [HL12620]

Baroness Berridge: End Point Assessment (EPA) is a key element of our reforms to enhance the quality of apprenticeships, ensuring apprentices are able to evidence they are occupationally competent via an independent assessment. The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education has introduced flexibilities for EPAs, including remote assessment where practicable, 12 week extensions to the time limit for completion, and relaxation of the order in which elements of the EPA can be taken, in order to mitigate the effects of disruption caused by COVID-19 to EPAs.

Following the introduction of National Restrictions on 6 January, EPAs should now take place remotely wherever possible and all EPA flexibilities will be extended until at least 31 August. EPAs contain a range of assessment methods, many of which can continue safely, subject to the apprentice having completed all of their learning and being ready for assessment.

Assessments can continue in colleges, training providers' premises, assessment venues and workplaces where they cannot be conducted remotely and where providers and assessment organisations judge it right and safe to do so. Further information is available here: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950845/Apprenticeship_response_to_COVID-19_FINAL.pdf#page=28&zoom=100,69,640.

We continue to review the flexibilities in place to ensure high-quality assessment can continue allowing apprentices to undertake their assessments despite current operating constraints. Our intention is to safeguard the quality of apprenticeships, and EPAs are an integral part of that.

Armed Forces: Cyprus

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government under what arrangements they can send armed forces personnel and military equipment to sovereign bases in Cyprus; and whether they are required to provide 15 days notice in advance of any such deployment. [HL12790]

Baroness Goldie: The Sovereign Base Areas comprise a UK overseas territory, and there is no requirement for advanced notice of Armed Forces personnel or military equipment deploying/arriving from the UK.

Armed Forces: Falkland Islands

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are required to notify any authorities of their intention to move troops and equipment to the Falkland Islands; and if so, (1) who must be informed and (2) under what restrictions are such movements conducted. [HL12847]

Baroness Goldie: There is no requirement to provide advance notice of Armed Forces personnel or military equipment arriving in the Falklands.

Armed Forces: Gibraltar

Asked by Lord Empey

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they are required to notify any authorities of their intention to move armed forces personnel and military equipment to Gibraltar; if so, to whom they give notice; and under what conditions such movements are permitted. [HL12792]

Baroness Goldie: Gibraltar is a UK overseas territory, and there is no requirement for advanced notice of Armed Forces personnel or military equipment deploying/arriving from the UK.

Arts: Visas

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Baroness Barran on 19 January (HL Deb, col 1084) that they "pushed for ambitious arrangements for performers and artists to be able to work across Europe", what were the details of those ambitious arrangements; whether they had proposed a maximum time period allowed for performers and artists to

undertake visa-less work in Europe; and if so, what was that time period. [HL12633]

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to negotiate a separate standard visa-waiver arrangement with the EU that would include exemptions for artists. [HL12634]

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the EU's existing visa waiver agreements with other countries which cover 'artists performing an activity on an ad hoc basis' as a basis for a reciprocal agreement for short-term visas for artists working between the UK and the EU. [HL12635]

Asked by The Earl of Clancarty

To ask Her Majesty's Government what definition they use of the term 'ad hoc' in relation to visa arrangements for those artists performing an activity on an ad hoc basis between the EU and other countries; and whether that definition would cover artists whilst touring. [HL12636]

Baroness Barran: In negotiations, the EU tabled a proposal for a permanent visa waiver for short stays covering UK and EU nationals. This drew on bilateral agreements they have with some other third countries, such as Columbia, Peru and the UAE. Accepting a permanent short stay visa waiver for all current and future EU Member States was not, and is not, compatible with our manifesto commitment to take back control of our borders.

This proposal was accompanied by a Joint Declaration intended to direct those Member States who currently require short stay visas for "paid activities" to waive that requirement for "artists performing an activity on an ad hoc basis". This offer would not have addressed the creative and cultural industries' concerns. It did not include touring but only 'ad hoc' performances, did not cover accompanying support and technical staff and did not deal with the issue of work permits at all.

On the other hand, our proposals, which were developed with input from the creative and cultural sectors, would have allowed artists to tour in the UK and the EU more easily. The UK proposed to capture the work done by musicians, artists and entertainers, and their accompanying staff, through the list of permitted activities for short-term business visitors under the Mode 4 Chapter of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. This would have enabled musicians and other creative professionals to travel and perform in the UK and the EU without needing work-permits, for up to 90 days in any 6 month period. Regrettably, these proposals were repeatedly rejected by the EU.

The Government recognises the importance of touring for our world-leading cultural and creative sectors. We are establishing a Working Group, with sector representatives and government departments, with a view

to assisting those in the cultural and creative sectors to work as confidently as possible in the EU.

Ashington-Blyth Railway Line

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the allocation of £34 million to the scheme to restore passenger services to the Ashington–Blyth rail line, where the scheme lies within (1) the Rail Enhancement Schemes Pipeline and (2) the Governance for Railway Investment Projects (GRIP) process. [HL12639]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: On 23rd January, the Government announced £34m for preparatory works to progress re-opening the Northumberland line to passengers. A Final Business Case is now being prepared by DfT, Northumberland County Council and Network Rail, with a view to seeking a 'Decision to Deliver' through the RNEP by the end of the year. The scheme is currently at stage 4 of the GRIP process.

Cameroon: Peace Negotiations

Asked by Lord Boateng

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the passing of resolution S.Res.684 on 1 January by the United States Senate relating to violence in Cameroon, what discussions they have had with the government of the United States about relations with the government of Cameroon since the resolution; and what assessment they have made of (1) the impact of this resolution on the human rights situation in that country, and (2) the willingness of that government to revive the peace process. [HL12628]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK Government remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating situation in the North-West and South-West (Anglophone) regions of Cameroon, including about reports of human rights abuses and violations by both armed separatists and the security forces. As Rita French, the UK's International Ambassador for Human Rights set out at the UN Human Rights Council session on 15 September 2020, those who have abused and violated human rights in Cameroon must be held responsible. The UK Government regularly raises the crisis with international partners, including the United States, and in multilateral fora. Given the short period of time since resolution S.Res.684 passed, it is too soon to determine what impact it will have. The UK Government will continue to monitor the situation closely.

We urge all sides to remain engaged with the Swiss-led process to facilitate talks. The Minister for Africa spoke to the Prime Minister of Cameroon, Joseph Ngute, in December 2020 to stress the need for inclusive dialogue and a peaceful solution which addresses the root causes of the crisis.

Child Trust Fund: Mental Capacity

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government who are, or will be, the members of the working group, announced on 1 December 2020, to examine ways to improve the process of accessing Child Trust Funds for parents or guardians of children who lack mental capacity; and when they expect that group to report on its findings. [HL12579]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Following the 1 December 2020 announcement, a cross government working group has been established to look at the issues raised in relation to access to Child Trust Funds. The Group has representation from Her Majesty's Treasury, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry of Justice and convened on 8 January and 29 January. Engagement with external stakeholders will continue as proposals develop. Court of Protection application forms are a matter for the judiciary and the Court of Protection Rules Committee will review these in light of issues raised by campaigners.

The working group will report to Ministers in due course.

Asked by Lord Blunkett

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to grant access to parents to a Child Trust Fund without requiring a Court of Protection Order. [HL12580]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: The Government places a high degree of importance upon protecting and supporting those who lack the mental capacity to make decisions for themselves. For that reason, anyone who wishes to manage the finances of a person who lacks the mental capacity to do so for themselves must have the legal authority to do so. Legal authority for someone who lacks mental capacity can only be obtained via an order from the Court of Protection or by registering a lasting power of attorney. These processes are provided for in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and ensure vulnerable people are not exploited. They are not new or specific to Child Trust Funds but apply to the affairs of all vulnerable people.

We understand the concerns that have been raised and want to make the process of obtaining legal authority to access a Child Trust Fund as straightforward as possible, while maintaining important safeguards. A cross-government working group has convened to consider what steps can be taken to reduce the burden placed upon the parents and guardians of disabled children. The Government announced on 1 December that court fees can be waived or refunded when seeking access to a Child Trust Fund. The Court of Protection Rule Committee will consider how to progress work on Court of Protection forms.

Children in Care

Asked by Lord Bradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many children were taken into care because their mother was given a custodial sentence in each of the last five years; and how many such children were in care for (1) less than two months, (2) two months to four months, (3) four months to six months, (4) six months to 12 months, and (5) over 12 months. [HL12581]

Baroness Berridge: The department does not hold the information centrally as data is not collected on the number of children who enter care as a result of their mother receiving a custodial sentence.

China: India

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the governments of (1) India, and (2) China, about the dispute in north Sikkim. [HL12599]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: We welcome ongoing discussions between Indian and Chinese military commanders along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and efforts to deescalate tensions, including the ninth round of Corps Commander-Level talks on 24 January. The status of the border is a bilateral matter for India and China to resolve and we continue to support a peaceful resolution between India and China of the border question.

Columbia: Politics and Government

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the (1) political, and (2) economic, situation in Columbia. [HL12600]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Significant progress has been made in Colombia since its 2016 Peace Accords, and supporting the Colombian government in implementing them fully remains a UK Government priority. Challenges remain, however, particularly related to security in some areas, and the threats faced by human rights defenders and social leaders.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant economic impact on Colombia. Its economy has shrunk for the first time in over 20 years. However, the IMF emphasises that the Colombian economy has "strong underlying fundamentals," and the government has ambitious plans to support economic recovery. The UK Government considers Colombia an attractive opportunity for British business. Our continuity Free Trade Agreement has been ratified by the Colombian Congress,

and is now being considered by the Constitutional Court.

Coronavirus: Children

Asked by Baroness Masham of Ilton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to advise schools to provide space for pupils experiencing long-term effects of COVID-19 to take rest breaks during the school day. [HL12736]

Lord Bethell: Children experiencing the long-term effects of COVID-19 should expect to have the same access to school as every other child with a long-term health condition.

The Department for Education's guidance for schools, Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions: Statutory guidance for governing bodies of maintained schools and proprietors of academies in England, which details statutory duties. This includes Individual Health Plans (IHPs) which schools must maintain to enable children with long term medical conditions to have full access to education. IHPs can include ensuring that children with a medical need to do so, are able to take rest breaks during the school day along with other reasonable adjustments. A copy of the guidance is attached.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Supporting pupils at school with medical condition [Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions .pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:

<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-01-28/HL12736>

Coronavirus: Disease Control

Asked by Lord Birt

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of (1) the most common situations in which COVID-19 was transmitted in December 2020, and (2) why some areas of England experienced higher levels of transmission than others in that month. [HL11858]

Lord Bethell: The weekly national influenza and COVID-19 surveillance report summarises the information from the surveillance systems which are used to monitor COVID-19, influenza, and other seasonal respiratory viruses in England. The most common settings for which COVID-19 was transmitted in December 2020 were care homes, hospitals, educational settings, prisons, workplace settings, food outlet/restaurant and other settings.

The new variant of the COVID-19 virus along with the differing tier systems in operation at the time have been identified as contributors of higher levels of transmission in some areas.

Coronavirus: Vaccination

Asked by *Baroness Kennedy of Cradley*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what representations they have made to the World Health Organization about the distribution of COVID-19 vaccinations to less economically developed countries. [HL12598]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The UK is committed to rapid equitable access to safe and effective vaccines. The World Health Organization (WHO) is a co-lead for the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, a coalition of leading international organisations and partners in the development and equitable delivery of COVID-19 vaccines, treatments, and diagnostics. The UK is a founding member of the ACT-Accelerator, and is represented on its Facilitation Council. The UK engages regularly with WHO and other ACT-Accelerator partners on strategic direction, resource mobilisation, and implementation.

The COVAX Facility is the vaccines pillar of the ACT-Accelerator. It aims to secure 2 billion vaccine doses in 2021, including 1.3 billion for 92 developing countries through the COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC). The WHO provides key technical support, guidance, and assessment to countries on vaccine regulation, equitable allocation, and national deployment and vaccination plans. The UK has committed £548 million to the COVAX AMC, which aims to start vaccine deliveries in the first quarter of 2021.

Asked by *The Lord Bishop of St Albans*

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many COVID-19 vaccination doses they have ordered in total; whether they intend to order more doses than the number required to vaccinate the population of the UK; and if so, what plans they have to ensure that any surplus doses are used effectively. [HL12612]

Lord Callanan: The UK Government has secured early access to 457 million vaccine doses through agreements with eight separate vaccine developers. This includes agreements with BioNTech/Pfizer, Oxford/AstraZeneca, GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi Pasteur, Novavax, Janssen, Valneva and Moderna.

The Government continues to monitor the landscape of COVID-19 vaccine development, both here in the UK and internationally, and will keep the situation under review.

My Rt. Hon. Friend the Prime Minister has made clear that equitable access is an integral part of the UK's approach to vaccine development and distribution. The UK is working with international partners to support vaccine development, manufacturing scale-up and future distribution to meet both domestic and international needs.

Crown Court: Buildings

Asked by *Lord Garnier*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is (1) the percentage of the total number, and (2) the actual number, of court rooms in the Crown Court estate of England and Wales not being used for trials; and how long has each Crown Court centre had unused court rooms. [HL12591]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Prior to the March lockdown there were over 450 Crown Court rooms available for use. Jury trials were paused on 23rd March. Since then we have undertaken reconfiguration of our estate to comply with social distancing measures.

The availability of rooms fluctuates day by day, but as of the end of December 2020 we had over 290 Crown Court rooms available for Jury trials across the existing HMCTS estate, plus 120 rooms available for non-jury trial business. This comprises more than 80% of the total conventional Crown Court estate. In addition, we have 13 Jury rooms from Nightingale venues, which provide a total of 40 rooms overall across the estate. There are circa 80 Crown Court rooms not currently in use for hearings for a variety of reasons, including use as overspill accommodation in multi-handers (i.e. multi-defendant) trials to facilitate use of operational courtrooms, unsuitability for socially distanced hearings or to allow for continued maintenance.

Each Crown Court will, at times, have unused court rooms as utilisation of rooms is dependent upon a number of factors which include listing practices, availability of parties and trial outcomes.

This Government is doing everything possible to respond to the challenge of COVID-19, and the impact it has had on the justice system. We are working hard to deliver additional capacity through Nightingale Courts with an aim to have a total of 60 such courtrooms open by the end of March 2021.

Disposable Income and Gambling

Asked by *Lord Foster of Bath*

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the average amount of weekly disposable income; and what assessment they have made of the average amount of weekly gambling expenditure. [HL12798]

Baroness Barran: According to ONS data, the mean household disposable income in 2020 was £36,900, equating to approximately £710 per week. This data can be accessed at:

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/bulletins/householddisposableincomeandinequality/financialyear2020>.

Further consideration of how assessments might be made of disposable and discretionary income is included in the Gambling Commission's consultation and call for evidence on Remote Customer Interaction which is available at:

https://consult.gamblingcommission.gov.uk/author/remote-customer-interaction-consultation-and-call/supporting_documents/CI%20consultation%20call%20for%20evidence.pdf#page=19.

In the same consultation and call for evidence, the Commission estimates that online gamblers spend an average (mean) of £57 per month on online gambling. However, this is only an indicative estimate based on Gross Gambling Yield for the remote sector and remote gambling participation rates from survey data, as the Commission does not track weekly or monthly gambling spend as an official statistic. The government is also aware of a recent study of Lloyds Banking Group customers in 2018 which estimates electronic transactions by gamblers to gambling operators across all sectors to average £112 (mean) per month. Note that unlike the Commission's calculation, this figure is outgoing transactions only and is not adjusted for any winnings. Caution should be applied in considering data based on averages as both discretionary income and gambling spend vary significantly between individuals.

Emigration

Asked by **Lord Horam**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their central estimate for the total out of country inflows to the UK of (1) EEA long-term workers, (2) EEA dependants, (3) non-EEA workers, and (4) non-EEA dependants, in each of the five years from 2020/21 to 2024/25, arising from the calculations in the Impact Assessment for the Changes in Immigration Rules; and what are the relevant comparator figures for each of the previous five years. [HL12594]

Baroness Williams of Trafford: The information below is taken from modelling underpinning Home Office Impact Assessment HO0376 'Impact Assessment for changes to the Immigration Rules for Skilled Workers', with further details on the modelling framework and limitations of analysis also set out in that document and the 'Technical Annex to accompany the Impact Assessment for changes to the Immigration Rules for Skilled Workers'.

These documents can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-documents-for-skilled-worker-immigration-rules>.

Estimates of outflows of long-term EEA and non-EEA workers and their dependants were used to inform the overall estimates of volumes and costs, but not presented separately in the documents above. These estimates are set out in the table below. All figures, including for the period 2016/2017 to 2019/20 are estimates based on modelling.

Year	Estimated Long-Term EEA Worker - Outflow	Estimated Dependants of Long-Term EEA Worker - Outflow	Estimated Long-Term Non-EEA Worker - Outflow	Estimated Dependants of Long-Term Non-EEA Worker - Outflow
2016/17	~50k	~10k	~10k	~5k
2017/18	~70k	~10k	~10k	~5k
2018/19	~55k	~10k	~10k	~5k
2019/20	~75k	~10k	~10k	~10k
2020/21	~70k	~10k	~15k	~10k
2021/22	~65k	~10k	~15k	~10k
2022/23	~50k	~10k	~20k	~15k
2023/24	~40k	~5k	~20k	~15k
2024/25	~35k	~5k	~25k	~20k

Data is rounded to nearest 5,000, and all data are estimates and subject to uncertainty. Dependants refer to dependants associated to main applicants and may not necessarily be of the same nationality as the main applicant. For further information on the modelling process and limitations in analysis please refer to Home Office Impact Assessment HO0376 'Impact Assessment for changes to the Immigration Rules for Skilled Workers', and 'Technical Annex to accompany the Impact Assessment for changes to the Immigration Rules for Skilled Workers'.

The Answer includes the following attached material:

Impact Assessment
[Revised_Impact_Assessment_for_the_Skilled_Worker_Route_signed.pdf]

The material can be viewed online at:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Lords/2021-01-26/HL12594>

Energy: Conservation

Asked by **Lord Taylor of Warwick**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have (1) to increase investment in low-carbon infrastructure, and (2) to reform business rates, to promote energy efficiency. [HL12621]

Lord Agnew of Oulton: The Government is committed to supporting low-carbon infrastructure, as set out in the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution.

With regards to energy efficiency, the Government is considering how the business rates system could respond to climate change through the fundamental review of business rates.

This will consider ideas for reform on all elements of the business rates system, including how business rates could support the decarbonisation of buildings.

Ferries: Wales

Asked by **Lord Roberts of Llandudno**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of cancelled ferry crossings to ports in Wales on employment in local communities; and what steps they are taking, if any, to provide training for other careers to such communities. [HL12846]

Baroness Bloomfield of Hinton Waldrist: There has been a reduced flow of freight traffic at ports across the UK since the end of the Transition Period and imposition of tighter restrictions to tackle Covid-19, including at Welsh ports. However, traffic flows are now gradually increasing – in fact, roll-on/roll-off freight flow at Welsh ports increased each week in January.

We recognise the need to provide as much support to the haulage sector as possible to smooth the transition to new trading arrangements. The Government has introduced a range of measures to help the industry meet new export requirements, including training, webinars and extensive guidance on GOV.UK. We are similarly ramping up communication and engagement efforts to ensure that traders are confident using Welsh routes. Furthermore, hauliers can benefit from the Trader Support Service which provides free advice and support to businesses of all sizes moving goods under the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Welsh ports – as part of the GB ‘land bridge’ – will continue to provide critical routes to and from the Republic of Ireland and continental Europe, and we are confident that Welsh ports will continue to thrive as we build on the opportunities provided by being an independent trading nation.

Fireworks: Regulation

Asked by **Lord Storey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to change the regulations for the licensing of premises that sell fireworks. [HL12614]

Asked by **Lord Storey**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to reduce the noise of fireworks sold to the general public from 120 decibels to 90 decibels. [HL12615]

Lord Callanan: There is a comprehensive regulatory framework already in place for fireworks that aims to reduce the risks and disturbances to people and animals.

Current legislation restricts retailers to only selling consumer fireworks during the traditional firework periods of November 5th, Diwali, New Year's Eve and the Chinese New Year. Retailers may only supply fireworks outside these traditional periods if they obtain a license from their local licensing authority. Existing legislation also controls the sale, availability and use of fireworks, as well as setting a curfew and noise limit.

Current legislation limits noise from fireworks available to consumers to a maximum of 120 decibels.

The Government remains committed to promoting the safe and considerate use of fireworks through an effective legislative framework and through non-legislative measures.

Gambling: Females

Asked by **Lord Foster of Bath**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what research, if any, they have conducted into the pathways to gambling disorder by women. [HL12796]

Lord Bethell: Public Health England is currently carrying out an evidence review on the prevalence, determinants and harms associated with gambling, and the social and economic burden of gambling-related harms. This includes reviewing the evidence on young people, men and women. The review is expected to be completed in March 2021.

Alongside this, the National Institute of Health Research commissioned a research unit in Sheffield University to undertake a mapping review of the effectiveness of national and international policies and interventions to reduce gambling-related harms.

Gibraltar: Borders

Asked by **Lord Lancaster of Kimbolton**

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on 25 January (HL11995), whether the political framework proposed will allow any veto by Spain as to who enters Gibraltar. [HL12604]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: The Political Framework will form the basis of the future treaty, which will finalise the border arrangements for Gibraltar. We have sent the Political Framework to the European Commission so that we can quickly initiate negotiations to develop the Framework into a new treaty. The Political Framework sets out that Gibraltar will continue to operate entry checks as now, in accordance with its immigration rules, and it is without prejudice to British sovereignty over Gibraltar.

High Speed 2 Railway Line

Asked by **Lord Berkeley**

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to order that operational noise surveys are conducted by an independent body or the Nominated Undertaker in accordance with the requirements of HS2 Information Paper F4: Operational Noise and Vibration Monitoring Framework, published on 23 February 2017. [HL12884]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: HS2 Phase One Information Paper F4 sets out the Government's current

plans for monitoring operational noise from HS2. The paper includes commitments to monitor the performance of noise and vibration control measures applied to the operational phase of the railway and to share information with Local Authorities. With HS2 operations still some years away, the detailed methodology for delivering the commitments contained in Information Paper F4, including the type of monitoring to be undertaken and who it will be done by, is yet to be determined.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Colne Valley

Asked by Lord Rotherwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they plan to publish the risk assessment evaluating the impact of the HS2 Colne Valley viaduct, and in particular, its proximity to the main runway at Denham Aerodrome; and if not, why not. [HL12849]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: An aeronautical study is currently being drafted by HS2 Ltd's specialist aeronautical advisors, following consultation with Denham Aerodrome. The company does not publish risk assessments on its website, but once finalised, it will be shared with Denham Aerodrome and can be made available upon request.

High Speed 2 Railway Line: Wendover

Asked by Lord Berkeley

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether the HS2 Phase One main works contractor for the section of the line past Wendover has produced any assessment of the Wendover Mined Tunnel Proposal; and if so, whether they will place a copy of any such assessment in the Library of the House. [HL12883]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The Wendover Mined Tunnel Proposal was assessed by HS2 Ltd and by independent consultants as being harder and more expensive to construct than the consented scheme. A decision was taken in 2018 to not divert Eiffage Kier (EK) resources to additionally assess the proposal, and this decision was communicated to the constituency MP and local councillors at the time.

Since then, EK (now EKFB) contractors have been involved in providing advice to the Department in relation to its ongoing scrutiny of the proposal as it has developed. In any event, the Department does not release detailed breakdowns of our commercial information nor information provided in confidence from our suppliers and subcontractors.

Higher Education: Admissions

Asked by Baroness Whitaker

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their report Interim Conclusion of the Review of Post-18 Education and Funding, published on 21 January, what equality assessment they have carried out into the

impact of introducing minimum entry requirements to higher education institutions on (1) Gypsies, Travellers and Roma, (2) care-leavers, (3) refugees, and (4) other under-represented groups; and what steps they are taking to ensure that such groups have equitable access to higher education. [HL12625]

Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay: The government is committed to social mobility – putting students, their needs, and their career ambitions first, be that in higher education, further education, or apprenticeships.

It is more crucial than ever that we tap into the brilliant talent that our country has to offer, and make sure that university places are available to all who are qualified by ability and attainment to pursue them, and who wish to do so.

We plan to consult on reforms to the higher education system, including consideration of minimum entry requirements, in spring 2021 before setting out a full response to the report and conclusion to the review of post-18 education and funding alongside the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

Hospices: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Jones of Cheltenham

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have, if any, to increase the level of financial support available for hospices to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL9990]

Lord Bethell: We have provided over £150million in additional funding to the hospice sector to date during the pandemic and have made up to £200 million available to the sector for additional capacity between April and July, and we continue to work closely with hospices to support their essential work. alongside this, hospices have benefited from the financial support offered by HM Treasury to all charities, such as paying no business rates for their shops next year and applying for a Business Interruption Loan. Charities, alongside other sectors, can also access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and the replacement Job Support Scheme and charity shops, which are already eligible for 80% charitable rate relief, will benefit from the new enhanced retail rate relief at 100%. We continue to keep the financial impact of COVID-19 on hospices under review.

Hospitals: Ministers of Religion

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the work done by hospital chaplains in helping (1) the welfare, and (2) the recovery, of patients. [HL12663]

Lord Bethell: No formal assessment has taken place.

Chaplaincy and faith services are funded locally. The commissioning of local services is conducted by clinical commission groups responding to the needs of their

individual patient populations and workforce, including as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. NHS England and NHS Improvement recognise the significant role chaplains and leaders of all faiths play in spiritual, emotional and psychological care and in the delivery of high-quality palliative and end of life care. This is recognised in clinical guides and for compassionate visiting arrangements.

Housing: Energy Performance Certificates

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to their target "of reaching as many existing homes as possible at EPC band C or above by 2035" in the Energy White Paper, published on 14 December 2020, what "as many existing homes as possible" means; and what estimate they have made of the number of homes that will not be included in that target. [HL12590]

Lord Callanan: The Government remains committed to the Clean Growth Strategy aim for as many homes as possible to be EPC Band C by 2035, where practical, cost-effective, and affordable.

In addition, for homes in fuel poverty, we remain committed to our statutory fuel poverty target of improving as many fuel poor homes as reasonably practicable to energy efficiency rating Band C by the end of 2030, as well as our interim target of Band D by 2025.

There is no set number of homes to be achieved within those targets. However, the Heat & Building Strategy and the updated Fuel Poverty Strategy, which we plan to publish in due course, will set out how we intend to meet our commitments and set us on a path to decarbonising homes and buildings by 2050.

Leasehold

Asked by Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Greenhalgh on 25 January (HL12025), whether 90 year lease extensions will still be an option after the proposed forthcoming leasehold reforms. [HL12623]

Lord Greenhalgh: The Government remains committed to promoting fairness and transparency for homeowners and ensuring that consumers are protected from abuse and poor service.

Through our reforms the length of a statutory lease extension will increase to 990 years, replacing the current 90 years for flats and 50 years for houses. Long leases provide long term security for leaseholders and saves them from paying for multiple lease extensions.

The Law Commission's report on enfranchisement contains recommendations relating to lease extensions that are not on statutory terms. We will respond to the Law Commission's remaining recommendations on enfranchisement as well as commonhold and right to manage in due course.

Local Government

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the local government arrangements in Oxfordshire. [HL12601]

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the local government arrangements in Derbyshire. [HL12602]

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the local government arrangements in Lincolnshire. [HL12603]

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the local authority arrangements in Nottinghamshire. [HL12727]

Asked by Lord Kennedy of Southwark

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to review the local authority arrangements in Kent. [HL12728]

Lord Greenhalgh: There is no question of any top down review or imposition of Government solutions. The Government believes that locally-led changes to the structure of local government can be an appropriate means of improving local service delivery, saving taxpayers' money and improving local accountability, and is clear that any reform of an area's local government, where there is strong local support for the principle of a unitary structure, is most effectively achieved through locally-led proposals put forward by those who best know the area.

The Government is aware that there is interest in a number of areas across the country about developing proposals for unitary local government. It is clear, however, that the pandemic has rightly necessitated resources across Whitehall and in local government being re-allocated to tackling Covid-19 and on economic recovery, and this must be Whitehall's and town halls' number one priority at present.

Mali: Politics and Government

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their most recent assessment of the (1) economic situation, and (2) political situation, in Mali. [HL12657]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: Mali is marked by chronic poverty and increasing humanitarian needs, driven by factors including rapid population growth, political instability, conflict and climate change. The International Monetary Fund estimates that COVID-19 and the socio-political crisis has resulted in the Malian

economy contracting by 2 per cent in 2020, although a recovery to 4 per cent growth is expected in 2021. The UK Government are concerned that over 7 million people need humanitarian assistance in Mali, according to the UN. In December 2020, the UK announced an additional £8 million of emergency aid to reach 275,000 more vulnerable people in the central Sahel, including Mali.

The UK has welcomed the priorities set out by Mali's Transitional Government and the establishment of the National Transitional Council. We hope that the Transitional Government will prepare for credible elections, take steps to implement the 2015 Peace Agreement, and tackle corruption and impunity. In the UN Security Council, the UK has called for the Transitional Government to build consensus across society ahead of elections and investigate allegations of human rights violations and abuses. Through our programmes, our diplomatic work and our recent deployment of 300 troops to the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Mali, MINUSMA, the UK is supporting stabilisation and progress on the peace process.

Mental Health: Children and Young People

Asked by Baroness Fall

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 22 January (HL12047), what steps they are taking to improve the collection of data in relation to the level of (1) extreme anxiety, (2) self-harm, and (3) suicide, amongst young and adolescent boys. [[HL12585](#)]

Lord Bethell: We are working with NHS Digital, mental health providers and partner organisations to improve the collection of data in the mental health services data set on people referred to secondary mental health services for anxiety and those who self-harm whilst an inpatient. We also fund the Multicentre for Self-Harm to provide representative and reliable data on self-harm in England.

Data on suicide registrations by coroners is collected by the Office for National Statistics and there is a time lag due to the length of time it can take to hold an inquest. Public Health England is piloting a national real-time surveillance system to monitor suspected suicide, by collecting early real time data which can be used to identify patterns of risk and causal factors, to inform national and local responses. HM Treasury has announced £1.2million funding to help support the development of the national system.

NHS: Negligence

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer by Lord Bethell on 6 August 2020 (HL7091), what assessment they have made regarding the payment of clinical negligence damages in 2019/20 with regard to (1) the value for money, and (2) the

quality, of the legal representation used by the NHS. [[HL12504](#)]

Lord Bethell: NHS Resolution has continued to increase the use of mediation and alternative dispute resolution to avoid the need for formal proceedings. NHS Resolution settles a majority of claims without court proceedings - in 2019/20, this was 75.1%. Less than 1% of all claims proceed to trial and NHS Resolution achieves a judgement in favour of the National Health Service in 75.3% of that subset of claims. NHS Resolution also negotiates large-scale contracts for its legal services, including fixed and capped fee arrangements, competitive hourly rates and performance management, ensuring value for money and a high quality service.

Nigeria: Politics and Government

Asked by Baroness Kennedy of Cradley

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is their most recent assessment of the (1) economic situation, and (2) political situation, in Nigeria. [[HL12658](#)]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: As Africa's largest economy and most populous country, Nigeria's success matters to the UK and to the continent as a whole. We want to see Nigeria thrive, delivering jobs and opportunities for its people, and creating opportunities for British business to invest through reform. We were deeply concerned by violence during protests in Lagos and other major cities in Nigeria in October 2020, which tragically claimed lives. We remain concerned about security issues elsewhere, particularly the situation in the North East, where terrorist groups including Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa continue to conduct attacks, causing immense suffering to all communities. The FCDO also remains committed to supporting the democratic process in Nigeria, and continue to stress the importance of free and fair elections ahead of the 2023 presidential race.

Pectus Excavatum: Surgery

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answers by Lord Bethell on 23 November (HL10163 and HL10164), what recommendations they (1) have published, and (2) intend to publish, about treatments for pectus excavatum in instances where an operation has not been approved. [[HL10762](#)]

Asked by Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

To ask Her Majesty's Government what NHS guidance is available on the circumstances in which surgery for pectus deformity can be accessed if it is deemed clinically necessary. [[HL10765](#)]

Lord Bethell: Decisions about surgical funding are made by clinical experts and therefore it would not be appropriate for Government to intervene.

Surgical treatment for individuals can be considered for pectus deformity if a clinician believes that a treatment or service, not routinely offered by the National Health Service, is the best treatment for their patient. In this case the clinician can, on behalf of their patient, make an individual funding request which takes into account individual clinical circumstances - for example, exceptional circumstances either in terms of clinical presentation or the ability of a patient to benefit.

NHS England has not issued any clinical guidance to doctors to assess the severity of pectus deformity or on the non-surgical options for pectus deformity treatment.

Performing Arts: Qualifications

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to continue the BTEC for Performing Arts. [HL12616]

Baroness Berridge: The department is reviewing post-16 qualifications at level 3 and below, to ensure that every qualification approved for public funding has a distinct purpose, is high quality and supports progression to positive outcomes. No decisions have been made about the future of particular subjects or qualifications.

Our second stage consultation of the review, which closed on 31 January, proposed a number of groups of qualifications for funding alongside A levels and T levels in the future. These include qualifications that have a strong practical focus and support progression to specialist higher education, where they deliver valuable skills not offered by A levels. This could include performing arts qualifications. We recognise concerns about the potential removal of well-established qualifications, which is why we have consulted extensively.

Pornography: Internet

Asked by Lord Grade of Yarmouth

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to bring into force all of the provisions of Part 3 of the Digital Economy Act 2017 to ensure that children are not exposed to online pornography. [HL12891]

Baroness Barran: The Government announced in October 2019 that it will not commence the age verification provisions of Part 3 of the Digital Economy Act 2017 and instead deliver these protections through our wider online harms regulatory proposals.

Protecting children is at the heart of our plans to transform the online experience for people in the UK and the strongest protections in the online harms framework will be for children. All companies in scope will be required to assess whether children are likely to access their services, and if so, provide additional protections for children using them. Through the online harms framework, we will be able to go further than the Digital Economy Act's focus on online pornography on

commercial adult sites. We will be able to protect children from a broader range of harmful content and activity, across a wider range of sites.

Under our proposals, we expect companies to use age assurance or age verification technologies to prevent children from accessing services which pose the highest risk of harm to children, such as online pornography. The online harms regime will capture both the most visited pornography sites and pornography on social media, therefore covering the vast majority of sites where children are most likely to be exposed to pornography. Taken together we expect this to bring into scope more online pornography currently accessible to children than would have been covered by the narrower scope of the Digital Economy Act.

Prisons: Church Services

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether chapels in prisons are being used for religious services during the COVID-19 pandemic; and if not, why not. [HL12596]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: Prison chapels and multi-faith spaces have remained open for private prayer and reflection in a COVID-19 secure manner during the pandemic. The spaces have also been used to help support family contact in cases of family illness and bereavement.

Chaplains of all faiths play a central role in supporting prisoners during the pandemic. Although group worship has been temporarily suspended to ensure the safety of staff and prisoners, Chaplains have continued to visit prisoners on a one-to-one basis providing pastoral care, spiritual support and resources for worship. We will resume group worship in prison chapels and multi-faith spaces gradually in line with public health guidance, when it is safe to do so.

Prisons: Health Services

Asked by Lord Patten

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the number of (1) doctors, and (2) other staff, being recruited into the prison medical service in meeting the needs of inmate health. [HL12667]

Lord Bethell: The Department does not hold the data requested.

There are currently 110 prisons in England for which NHS England commissions healthcare for. There is no mandated staffing level given to providers and contracts are awarded to those providers whose planned delivery model best fits with the need and outcomes required.

Prisons: Recreation Spaces

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to ensure that prisoners are given access

to gardens, recreation and green spaces in prisons as frequently as possible. [HL12597]

Lord Wolfson of Tredegar: All adult prisons are currently in a stage four regime, as outlined in the National Framework, to reduce contact between people and therefore reduce the chance of transmission of COVID-19. The regime restrictions we have implemented have brought new and different challenges across the prison estate and it is not currently practicable to provide as much access to open spaces as would ordinarily be the case for those in prisons where these facilities are available.

However, all prisons are required to deliver the essential elements of prison regime which includes daily access to exercise, wellbeing checks, domestics (e.g. phone calls, showers and cell cleans) and, in some cases, some structured on-wing activity.

The Ministry of Justice and HM Prison and Probation Service understand the importance of maintaining the safety, mental health and wellbeing of prisoners and this has remained a priority during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Railways

Asked by Lord Greaves

To ask Her Majesty's Government what is the role of Highways England in maintaining disused railway structures; what assessment they have made of the efficacy of existing procedures relating to disused railway structures; and what plans they have to review such procedures. [HL12994]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: In addition to its primary role as highway authority for the strategic road network in England, Highways England manages the Historical Railways Estate on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport across England, Scotland and Wales. Highways England's existing procedures are designed to keep the public safe and are underpinned by what is the safest and most appropriate option for a given structure.

Although there are currently no plans to review existing procedures, this will be kept under consideration.

Railways: Catering

Asked by Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government what guidance they have issued to train operators on serving food and drink on trains. [HL12691]

Baroness Vere of Norbiton: The safety of both staff and passengers remains of the utmost importance. We have issued comprehensive guidance to train operators on the steps they need to take to protect staff in line with Public Health England advice. Where social distancing can be achieved, on-train catering facilities may continue. The regulator, the Office of Rail and Road, has also issued guidance to operators regarding catering services on trains.

Roads

Asked by Lord Vaizey of Didcot

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with local authorities and community groups about renaming roads after recipients of (1) the Victoria Cross, (2) the George Cross, and (3) other honours. [HL12624]

Lord Greenhalgh: I agree with my noble Lord that it is important we celebrate our country's military heroes and are proud of their achievements. We want to see local authorities engaging with their local communities to name streets after local heroes. The department has had no discussions around this issue with local authorities as the naming of streets is the responsibility of local government.

Sleeping Rough: Coronavirus

Asked by The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government how many rough sleepers there are in England; and what plans they have to deliver the same level of support as the 'Everyone In' campaign, launched on 26 March 2020 for the duration for which restrictions are in place to address the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL12733]

Lord Greenhalgh: We have taken unprecedented steps to protect rough sleepers during the pandemic. This work has not stopped, and through Everyone In, by November we had supported around 33,000 people with nearly 10,000 in emergency accommodation and over 23,000 already moved on into longer-term accommodation.

Given the new variant of COVID-19, and the current national lockdown, we are redoubling our efforts to ensure that people who sleep rough are kept as safe as possible and that we do everything we can to protect the NHS. This is backed by £10 million to protect rough sleepers and ensure their wider health needs are addressed.

We have written to all local authorities, to ensure that even more rough sleepers are safely accommodated, and to ask that this opportunity is actively used to make sure that all rough sleepers are registered with a GP where they are not already and are factored into local area vaccination plans, in line with JCVI prioritisation for COVID-19 vaccinations.

The most recent national statistics on rough sleeping are the Autumn 2019 annual statistics, which showed a total figure of 4,266 rough sleepers on any given night. The next rough sleeping snapshot statistics for Autumn 2020 will be published later this month.

We continue to work with the homelessness sector, local authorities and health and care partners, to ensure the needs of those experiencing homelessness can be met during the pandemic.

Social Rented Housing: Energy Performance Certificates

Asked by Lord Foster of Bath

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Answer given by Lord Callanan on 25 January (HL11978), what estimate they have made of (1) the number of social houses that will be upgraded to EPC band C by the various schemes listed in that Answer, and (2) how many social houses will remain below EPC band C. [HL12589]

Lord Callanan: There are approximately 4.1 million social homes in England, with around 1.6 million homes currently rated below the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C.

The 2019 Conservative Manifesto committed to a £3.8bn Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund over a 10-year period, to improve the energy performance of social rented homes. The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund will support the ambition set out in the Clean Growth Strategy, that as many homes as possible are improved to EPC band C by 2035, where practical, cost-effective, and affordable, and for all fuel poor homes to reach this target by 2030. The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund will bring a significant amount of the social housing stock that is currently below EPC C up to that standard.

The following schemes are also targeting energy performance improvement in social housing:

The £500m Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme, which aims to improve the energy efficiency of around 50,000 homes rated EPC level D to G, where Social Housing Providers may work with Local Authorities to upgrade their housing stock.

The £50 million Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Demonstrator, which has awarded funding to social landlords across England and Scotland to test innovative approaches to retrofitting at scale, seeing around 2300 social homes improved to at least EPC band C.

The Green Homes Grant voucher scheme, which provides grants to help homeowners improve the energy efficiency of their homes, is open to social, as well as private, landlords.

Social Security Benefits: Broadband

Asked by Lord Sikka

To ask Her Majesty's Government what plans they have to introduce legislation under which anyone on Universal Credit or other social security benefits would be entitled to a free broadband subscription. [HL12914]

Baroness Stedman-Scott: There are no plans to introduce legislation on this issue.

Supermarkets: Minimum Wage

Asked by Lord Taylor of Warwick

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the compliance of large supermarket companies with minimum wage requirements. [HL12619]

Lord Callanan: We are clear that everyone who is entitled to the National Minimum Wage should receive it and we will take action where employers have been found to be in breach of the law. In 2019/20, HM Revenue & Customs identified £20.8 million in arrears for over 263,000 workers and issued just under 1,000 penalties totalling £18.5 million to non-compliant employers. In addition, on 31st December 2020 the Government named 139 employers, including 18 retailers, who had failed to pay the minimum wage and owed over £5 million to more than 80,000 workers. This demonstrates our continued commitment to our clear and consistent message that it is never acceptable for employers to short-change their employees.

Supply Teachers: Coronavirus

Asked by Lord Storey

To ask Her Majesty's Government what financial support they are giving to supply teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. [HL12613]

Baroness Berridge: Schools will continue to receive their budgets for the coming year as usual, regardless of any periods of partial or complete closure. Schools have autonomy over these budgets and their employment arrangements and decisions on staffing are made at the local level.

If supply staff employed via employment agencies are unable to work due to COVID-19, their employment agency can place them on furlough and use the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme to claim for 80% of their wages, including during school holiday periods, provided that the eligibility criteria are met. Information on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>. Information on eligibility criteria is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-which-employees-you-can-put-on-furlough-to-use-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme>.

Employers can now flexibly furlough their employees for the hours the employee would usually have worked in that period, whilst also being able to work outside of the hours they are furloughed. Employees can work for any amount of time, and any work pattern but they cannot do any work for their employer during hours that employers record them as being on furlough. Information on this is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/claim-for-wage-costs-through-the-coronavirus-job-retention-scheme#flexible-furlough-agreements>.

The decision to furlough an employee, fully or flexibly, is entirely at the employer's discretion as it is dependent on a range of factors that the employer is best placed to determine, for example, the amount of work available for employees.

The government has provided additional financial support for those who are unable to work because they have COVID-19, or are self-isolating, which is outlined here: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-what-to-do-if-youre-employed-and-cannot-work?priority-taxon=5ebf285a-9165-476c-be90-66b9729f50da#if-someone-you-live-with-has-symptoms-of-coronaviru>.

UK Relations with EU: Northern Ireland

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they are having, or have had, with (1) suppliers, and (2) hauliers, in Great Britain to address any shortfall in goods being delivered to Northern Ireland since 1 January. [HL12608]

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the number of suppliers based in Great Britain that have suspended delivery of goods to Northern Ireland since 1 January. [HL12609]

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what estimate they have made of the projected reduction in Northern Ireland GDP in 2021 as a direct result of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland. [HL12610]

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the EU about extending the grace periods contained in the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland; and which specific grace periods they have discussed. [HL12909]

Asked by Lord Rogan

To ask Her Majesty's Government whether they have conducted a risk analysis of the consequences of the

UK invoking Article 16 of the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland; and, if so, whether they will publish it. [HL13016]

Lord True: As I made clear in my statement to the House on 2 February, there is an urgent need to address all outstanding issues relating to the Northern Ireland Protocol in order to deliver for the people of Northern Ireland and restore confidence. The letter sent to Vice-President Sefcovic by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, on 2 February, sets out the issues that the UK Government consider must be addressed, including grace periods.

The Government continues to regularly engage and work with stakeholders, including suppliers and hauliers in Great Britain. To assist traders, this Government launched the £200m Trader Support Service in December 2020, providing guidance, training and support for businesses in Great Britain and Northern Ireland on moving goods and any limited processes that may apply. Over 32,000 traders have registered, so far, for this service - including 3,000 hauliers.

In the days immediately following the end of the transition period, we were aware of a small number of traders who temporarily suspended deliveries to Northern Ireland. We are keeping this under review.

COVID-19 remains the main economic pressure being faced in Northern Ireland but the Government continues to monitor the flow of goods into Northern Ireland.

USA: Yemen

Asked by Lord Hylton

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the reported use of 'targeted killings' by the government of the United States during its operations in Yemen between 2013 and 2016. [HL12595]

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon: HMG has not made any such assessment. US operations are a matter for the US Government.

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